

## SW Region's "Eye on Training" is on Mentoring

This "Eye on Training" talks about how to develop an effective and professional mentoring relationship. For more information on how to establish a mentoring program at your locations, visit the SW Region HRDD webpage at [Special Programs - Mentor Program.](#)

### What is a Mentor?

There is more than one way to describe what a mentor is. A Mentor should be available to discuss goals and provide insight on how to handle career related challenges. Here are just a few terms to describe a mentor:

- **Confidant**
  - **Friend**
    - **Coach**
      - **Advisor**

### How does one get a Mentor?

One way is to request to participate in your organization's Mentoring Program. A Formal Mentoring Process will usually have an agreement or commitment to work together with specific goals identified and a plan to meet them. It is recommended that the Mentor be a person more senior to you in your organization, although not someone in your immediate work area.

The most common way to get a mentor actually happens naturally. Many of us may already have informal mentoring relationships. Have you noticed how we tend to seek out those individuals in our organization that we respect, display confidence and have a professional attitude. Informal Mentoring occurs when we:

- **Seek out someone for advice.**
- **Request assistance with a work process.**
- **Confide in others about a work situation.**

### What are some of the advantages of participating in a mentoring relationship?

- **Wisdom**
- **Trust**
- **Personal Strength**
- **Professional and Timely Advice**
- **Appreciation for Diversity in all areas**

### Are there any disadvantages?

Every process or relationship may experience disadvantages; the following identifies a few that may exist or develop in a mentoring relationship:

- **Superman Effect/Hero Worship** – What can happen when we think that someone always has all the right answers, always says and does the right things? We may elevate their status to that of Superman. Just remember that Superman and Wonderwoman are Movie Characters, and a Hero may put the well-being of others above their own. They may risk their own safety to save the lives of others. To prevent the superman effect, keep in mind that mentors are just human, they are not prefect and that they do and will continue to make mistakes. Ask your mentor to discuss how they progressed in their career. You may be surprised to hear that they started out just like many of us, and did not always handle situations with finesse.
- **Accepting Another's Beliefs/Values** - The mentee/associate must be free to make his or her own judgments based on their unique values and goals for the future, and not feel obligated to accept those of the Mentor.
- **Fear Factor** - Mentors can be a role model or someone who may have power in the organization. Fear prevents the mentoring experience from being effective. It is important for the mentee/associate to be able to speak up honestly or disagree with the Mentor without fear of jeopardizing the mentoring relationship.

### How long is a mentor relationship?

Friendships developed during the professional mentoring relationship may last a lifetime. Although, there may come a time when the parties in the relationship have gained the strength and knowledge desired and are ready to go their separate ways. Normally 3-5 years is an appropriate timeframe for this mentoring process.



### What skill is valuable in the mentoring process? "Listening"

### Customer Feedback



Your comments are valuable to us.  
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